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THE
NATURE AND EXTENT
OF THE
APOSTOLICAL COMMISSION.

A
S E R M O N,

Preached at the

C O N S E C R A T I O N

Of the Right Reverend

DR SAMUEL SEABURY,

B I S H O P

OF THE

E P I S C O P A L C H U R C H

In C O N N E C T I C U T.

B Y A
BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
I N
S C O T L A N D.

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S. MATTH. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH: GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

WHEN the blessed Author of these words, the beloved Son of God, appeared in the world, to take away the sin of it, and reconcile it to his offended Father, we are assured, to our unspeakable comfort and satisfaction, that by the sacrifice of himself once offered, he purchased pardon, grace; and eternal salvation, for all mankind in general. But as the application of these inestimable benefits, required a humble and obedient disposition in those who were to be partakers of them, it pleased the divine Administrator,

ministrator to appoint certain means for the conveyance of them, to the diligent and conscientious use of which, he has, for a trial of our faith and humility, annexed the blessings of our redemption. The dispensation of these means is committed to certain authorized members of that spiritual society, of which he is the glorious HEAD, and which he established upon earth for that purpose, and the scripture dignifies with the title of the Church of God, which he hath purchased with *his own blood*.^a It was with a view to this glorious purchase, that the redeeming God vouchsafed to clothe himself with our nature, and condescended to dwell among men. It was to make peace between heaven and earth, and to publish the glad tidings of salvation to a wretched world.

But though this was the sole design of his miraculous incarnation, yet he does not seem to have entered formally upon it, till he was solemnly called and commissioned thereto, by

^a Acts xx. 28. The Greek is *διὰ τῆς ἰδίας αἱματος*, with his own *proper* blood. On this passage the learned Mr Jones, in his *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*, has the following note. "Not that God, strictly speaking, has any *blood* of *his own* to shed, but that he who shed his blood for us *as man* was *God* as well as man: or in other words, that *God* and *man* were *united in the same person*, something being predicated of *God*, which cannot possibly be true without such an union."

by an audible voice from heaven. So says S. Paul, "Christ glorified not himself to become an high-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee."^b In which words, the apostle plainly alludes to what happened at the baptism of Jesus, when the heavens were opened upon him, and "the spirit of God, descending like a dove, lighted on him, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."^c This was a solemn inauguration to his office, and, for the satisfaction of his followers, exhibited in an outward and visible manner. In consequence of which, as we are immediately after informed, he began to lay the foundation of his church, according to the plan of the New Testament, by preaching the gospel, and inviting all the Jews to become followers of him, and members of that blessed society he was now about to establish. And when the number of his followers began to increase, and the blessed work to grow upon his hands, he thought proper to ordain twelve, as the evangelist tells us, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to perform such miraculous

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^b Heb. v. 5.^c S. Matt. iii. 17.

cures in his name, as would tend to establish the truth of his doctrine. These he distinguished by the peculiar title of *Apostles*, as being the first persons he had sent with power to act in his name, and to carry on the good work he had so happily begun. Afterwards, when the harvest became too great for so few labourers as these twelve, our Lord was pleased to appoint seventy more, who though of an order inferior to the apostles, were yet empowered to preach the gospel, and to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine.

Thus early do we observe a subordination among the ministers of Christ, and a striking resemblance between the Jewish church and the Christian, with respect to their foundation, and the form of government established in them. It is true, that all this time, while Christ was gathering and collecting his church in his own person, it seems to have been wholly confined to the Jewish nation. He plainly declared, that he was not sent, “ but “ to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Upon this account, he is called by S. Paul, “ a minister of the circumcision,” and in many places of the gospel, he is stiled “ the “ King of the Jews.” But as at his death, the distinction between Jew and Gentile was

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was taken away, so by his resurrection, the bounds of his church, or kingdom, were most amply and gloriously enlarged. On this occasion, therefore, we find him enlarging the powers of his apostles, and granting them a full and extensive commission, in these comprehensive words, "As my Father
 " has sent me, even so send I you."^d Thereby assuring them, that as the Father had empowered him to collect a church, and ordain ministers in it, so he devolved this power upon them. And as before they had been only his personal attendants, waiting his orders from his own mouth, they were now to stand in his stead; to be, as it were, officers in trust, and to govern his church in his absence, as himself had done, whilst he lived among them. During his personal abode with them, they were sent out now and then to baptize and preach the gospel; but by this last and most important mission, when they were to supply the place of their absent master, they were empowered to do as he had done; that is, to communicate to others that Episcopal authority, which themselves had received from the chief Bishop; that so there might be a continual uninterrupted succession of ecclesiastical governors
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^d S. John xx. 21.

to the end of time. Accordingly at the granting of this commission, as another evangelist records it, their Master gave them a solemn promise of his special blessing, protection, and assistance, for the due discharge and execution of it to all ages. For so we read in the words of my text, that "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" and then he adds, in consequence of this universal sovereignty, with which as mediator he was now invested, "Go ye therefore and teach, or *make disciples to me* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

From this account of the powerful and extensive commission, given in these words, we may justly look upon it as the fundamental charter of the christian church, and therefore I have made choice of it as a subject very

suitable

* It is generally agreed, that the word *μαθησκατε*, properly signifies *make disciples*, as if our Lord had said, "make all nations my disciples, bring them over to my religion, that both Jews and Gentiles may become one flock under me, the great shepherd and bishop of their souls." See Beveridge's sermon on the text.

uitable to the present solemn and happy occasion: in honour of which, we cannot be better employed, than in considering the nature of those powers and privileges which were originally conferred by the commission in my text, and which, from the gracious promise there made, we have ground to hope will be continued in the church, even unto the end of the world.

Such is the interesting subject presented to our notice in the passage of scripture now before us: and that I may be able to do as much justice to it, as the limits of a short discourse will allow, I must endeavour to confine myself to that divine account of pure ecclesiastical authority, which is here so briefly narrated. According to this rule, I shall be obliged to consider the christian church in the same simple light, in which we at present view that part of it, whereof we are members, as a society entirely distinct by itself, without being incorporated into, or any way defended or supported by the state; but as it stood for the first three hundred years after Christ, unprotected, and therefore uncorrupted, by any legal establishment. Upon that spiritual and independent footing we shall behold it in its native purity, before it meddled with "the things of Cæsar," or
gave

gave Cæsar a sort of right to meddle with "the things of God."† Both these are equally dangerous deviations from the primitive plan of this holy society, and both have been too often adopted, to the manifest prejudice of its real interests. For while some have pretended to exempt all ecclesiastics from every sort of civil jurisdiction, attempting to raise the governors of the church to a supremacy even in temporal matters over the civil magistrate ; yea, and have taken upon them, on some occasions, by virtue of their spiritual powers, to absolve subjects from their allegiance to their lawful princes : others again have run into a quite contrary error, and by making

† No sooner was the empire become christian, than we find the bishops of the church under a necessity of appealing to our Lord's decision, S. Matth. xxii. 21. Athanasius was obliged to tell the Emperor Constantius, that those who appealed to him in ecclesiastical matters, did set him up instead of Christ, and so made him an anti-christ, by placing him as Head of the Church, in opposition to Christ, its true and only Head. Hosius, another bishop, addressed him thus, " Do not concern thyself in ecclesiastical affairs, nor command us in these matters ; but rather learn those things of us ; God hath committed to thee the empire, and he hath entrusted us with those things that belong to the church. It is written, ' Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' It is not lawful for us, O Emperor, to hold the earthly empire ; neither hast thou the power of holy things." Athanas. Ep. ad Solitar.

making the exercise of all spiritual authority, to depend entirely on the will and pleasure of temporal governors, have opened a door to endless schisms and divisions, and laid the office of the priesthood open to every invader, who chuses to comply with the terms imposed by encroaching statesmen.

Such are the unhappy consequences of giving way to the mistaken opinions of mankind, with regard to the important commission now under our consideration. Because we are assured, in the words of my text, that *all* power in heaven and in earth was given to Christ as our mediator; and are told in another place, that as the Father sent him, so he sent his apostles, therefore some of their aspiring successors, full of a vain and worldly ambition, have fondly imagined, that they ought to be exempted from the jurisdiction, and superior to the controul of all earthly powers; forgetting, it seems, that their great Lord and Master, though he was the supreme head and sovereign of the church, yet never denied the authority of the state in all temporal matters, but lived in constant subjection and obedience to the civil powers, and gave tribute to whom tribute was due, custom to whom custom, honour to whom honour. The Jews, indeed, thought

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proper,

proper, in the height of their malice, to accuse him of making himself a king, and thereby setting himself up as an enemy to Cæsar. But Christ himself, who best understood the nature of his own kingdom, would by no means admit the truth of this accusation ; and to shew the injustice of it, referred to those frequent directions he had given his followers, not to rise up against their governors, but to pay them all due deference and obedience. We do not read that he himself ever exercised any one single act of civil jurisdiction. When one desired justice of him against his brother, his answer was, " Who made me a judge or a divider among you ?" And when Pilate questioned him strictly, whether he was really the King of the Jews or not, he openly declared himself to be a king indeed, but one very different from what his enemies thought he pretended to be. " My kingdom," says he, " is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight for me, that I should not be delivered to the Jews ; but now is my kingdom not from hence." His kingdom came from heaven at first, and was to be established and completed in heaven at last. Therefore the power

* S. John xviii. 36.

power and authority conveyed by him to his apostles, was of a quite different nature from those powers which belong to and are claimed by earthly governors. And were this difference duly attended to, there would not be the least clashing or interference between the respective rights of church and state.ⁿ For as the church would pretend no claim to those emoluments and temporal dignities, which have been foolishly lavished upon it; much less set up its governors as a sort of petty sovereigns, to interfere with and dictate to the sovereigns of this world: So neither would the state encroach upon the privileges of the church, nor assume a right to take away or restrain the exercise of those spiritual powers, which Christ its divine head so evidently and amply bestowed upon it. For surely the commission he gave his

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apostles

ⁿ "All the confusion arises," says an ingenious author, "when the one will put their sickle into the others harvest, when the civil power will take upon them to controul or give laws to the church, in the exercise of her spiritual authority, or the church do the like to the state in their temporal authority. This is confounding of heaven and earth: which agree best at the distance God has placed them. To bring them together, would be a new Chaos, a contradiction irreconcilable. Such is the attempt of blending the sacred and the civil powers together." See the *Regale & Pontificate*, p. 18.

apostles is as plain and full as words can make it : and they seem perfectly to have understood the divine virtue and efficacy of it, and the obligations they were under to act up to it, in spite of all opposition : for when two of them were severely threatened by the Jewish Sanhedrim, and strictly commanded not “ to speak at all, nor teach in the name “ of Jesus,” their answer was sensible and spirited, and plainly implied that they had a commission from God to preach the gospel, which must be executed at the utmost peril of their souls, and which no human power could possibly set aside : for so they tell their judges, “ Whether it be right in the sight of “ God, to hearken unto you, more than un- “ to God, judge ye !”¹ Hence it is evident that

¹ Acts iv. 19. The late Dr Sherlock, Dean of St. Paul's, in his *Summary of the Controversies*, p. 119. says expressly, “ If bishops will not exercise that power “ which Christ has given them, they are accountable “ to the Lord for it. But they cannot give it away, “ neither from themselves, nor from their successors ; “ for it is theirs only to use, not to part with it.” Another divine of the Church of England, Mr Reeves, in his sermon on Heb. xiii. 17. speaking of the independency of the church, says, “ It has been largely and “ warmly argued on both sides ; but the merits of the “ cause seem to lie in little room. The question to be “ resolved, in short, is this ; Whether Christ has “ committed the government of the church, to the “ apostles and their successors, or to the laity and civil

that the church as constituted by Christ, must be allowed to be independent on the state, or these apostles must be considered as guilty of disobedience and sedition. And the succeeding bishops, for the first three hundred years after Christ, must lie under the same charge: for they held religious assemblies, governed their clergy and people, and executed all other parts of their sacred function, not only without leave from the state, but very often in direct opposition to it.

To lessen the force of this argument, I know, it is objected, that during the first three centuries, the princes of this world were all unconverted heathens, and so had no right to expect any compliances from the christians:

“magistrate? Now this can be decided only by scripture; from Christ’s commission, and from the practice of the apostles, and their successors, consequent thereupon. And therefore all arguments for the “Regale,” (i. e. for the king being head of the church) “taken from *year books, reports, and even acts of parliament*, are of no weight in the question before us. For be they never so full and positive against “the inherent power of the clergy, yet certain it is, “and may be spoken, I hope, without offence, that “there is no omnipotency in parliaments, and that the “gospel is not repealable by the civil power.” Many thanks to Mr Reeves, for this strong and sensible vindication of the clergy of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, who have ventured for a long time to shew more regard to the *acts* of the *apostles*, than to the *acts* of the *British parliament*.

christians : whereas their coming over to the faith altered the case, and gave them a better title to interfere in the concerns of the church. Yet I can see no good reason for this inference, nor any just ground for supposing, that the civil powers, by receiving baptism, which is a gift *from* the church, should acquire any new branch of government, or controul *over* it, which they had not before. By being admitted to the privileges of communion in the church, it might be thought they were obliged in gratitude to protect and cherish it ; but surely no argument can be fairly drawn from this, to justify any infringement of its spiritual powers, or any interference with the quiet and peaceable exercise of them*. From what has been already

* The much admired author of the *Case of the Regale & Pontificate*, p. 22. observes, “ That if Christian Kings intend to do honour to the commission of Christ, they should do it freely, without encroaching upon any part of it. They would not have their beneficence and protection to the church of Christ understood as a bribe to her, to betray and deliver up into their hands, the powers committed into her charge by Christ ! That would be to invade Christ himself ! And to act the part of the greatest enemy to his spouse the church, to tempt her to unfaithfulness, and render her obnoxious to his heavy displeasure. And will she be true to them, whom they have corrupted to be false to Christ ! Nor will they escape ! For he is a jealous God, and will not give

ready said on the nature of those powers which Christ left with his church, I think it is sufficiently evident that there is a manifest distinction established by our holy religion, between the spiritual kingdom of our Redeemer, and the temporal sovereignties of this world : a distinction which will appear in a still clearer light, if we consider, that the rewards and punishments, whereby the church of Christ enforces its laws, are of a spiritual nature, and have respect chiefly to a future and eternal state : they are such as in this life can only influence men by means of their

“ his honour to another. He alone will be head of
 “ his church. It is an honour and a trust, he has not
 “ communicated to any angel of heaven, much less to
 “ any king upon earth.” If there be any truth in these observations, (and this author’s writings are generally acknowledged to have adorned, and done much real service to the cause of christianity) I need not say how much to be lamented is the present situation of the established Church of England, the governors of which, (if her bishops can be called such) are so fettered and tied down in the exercise of their spiritual powers, by their connection with the state, that if the apostolical succession, or the christian religion, were to be lost in every other part of the world, they could not stir one foot to restore it, without the aid of the civil government : “ The civil government ! (says Mr Leslie)
 “ whose constitution and authority is temporary and
 “ transient : which must end and be extinguished for
 “ ever, while the church shall reign and be triumphant
 “ to all eternity.” *Regale & Pontificate*, p. 214.

their faith: whereas those rewards and punishments which proceed from the civil power, if they do not affect us in this life, they cannot affect us at all. Nay, the very rights and privileges to which we are entitled as members of these different societies, are altogether distinct from one another. Our civil rights and liberties vary, according to our various situations in life : but the privileges of christians are alike in all ranks and conditions. So says S. Paul, " By one spirit we are all " baptized into one body, whether we be " Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or " free."¹ All are one and the same in Christ Jesus. For certain wise reasons of providence, the church was, for a while, confined to Judæa, and the chosen people of that land were thereby separated and distinguished from all other nations. But in the fulness of time, this wall of partition was broken down : the glad tidings of salvation were preached to all people, and the church, or society of the faithful, was thereby enlarged and made capable of receiving all that would come into it. God had promised his Son " the heathen for his inheritance, and the " utmost parts of the -earth for his possession."^m Accordingly our blessed Saviour

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13.^m Psal. ii. 8.

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gave a large and unlimited commission to his apostles, "*to preach the gospel to every creature,*" as S. Mark has it, or as S. Matthew expresses it in the text, "*to teach all nations, baptizing*" them in the name of the Father, and of "the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" which part of the apostolical commission, is the next thing that falls under our consideration.

I have already observed, that the proper meaning of this passage is, *to make all nations disciples to Christ by baptizing them*, to initiate them in his faith, and enter them into union with him, by means of that sacred institution, which he had appointed for that purpose, an institution to be duly and regularly administered in the name of the one true God, as revealed under the gospel, by the gracious titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the three adorable witnesses who "bear record in heaven" to the mysterious scheme of man's salvation. Such was the method the divine wisdom was pleased to adopt, for putting mankind in the way of obtaining the blessings of this salvation. It was not enough that they should be properly taught and instructed in the great doctrines of the gospel; for that knowledge they might have acquired from teachers, not so

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solemnly authorized, as those who received the commission in my text. But the truth is, the christian church is not like a sect of philosophers, distinguished only by their adherence to some particular system, or their belief of some useful and excellent truths, without any other bond of union, or form of admission to the participation of certain privileges. Though indeed this is a doctrine very much espoused, especially by those, whose loose incoherent notions of things, will not allow them to associate with any body of christians, and who yet pretend to have a sense of their duty to God, and even a respect for the christian religion, although they be in communion with no part of Christ's church. Had the first converts to our religion been of this opinion, they would not have shewn so much zeal for maintaining an outward and visible communion with Christ; they would not have suffered so much for "continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."^a But they knew

^a Acts ii. 42. What was the sense of the primitive christians on this head, we may learn from Dr Potter, in his *Discourse on Church Government*, p. 28. "Not one example," says he, "of any christian church can be produced through the whole world, where

knew well that the benefits of the gospel, or, which is the same, the privileges of the church belonged to them, not in their personal capacities, but as they were members of the one body of Christ. And therefore, they expected all spiritual blessings in common with their brethren, and by virtue of Christ's public institutions, which they justly considered as the means of uniting them to Christ under the character of their Head, and of deriving food and nourishment from him as their Shepherd: and indeed the reason of the thing is very plain and obvious. For unless we adhere to Christ's flock, how can we expect any benefit from the care and protection of the Shepherd? Unless we shew ourselves members of his church, by joining with it in all the bonds of christian communion, how shall we claim a share in any

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of

“the sacraments were not administered, the gospel
 “preached, and the worship of God celebrated, in an
 “open and public manner. Even in the sharpest per-
 “secutions, the christian assemblies, tho' it may be
 “not so openly as in times of peace, were constantly
 “held and frequented: and whoever did not chuse to
 “endure the most cruel death, rather than preserve his
 “life by absenting himself, was thought unworthy to
 “be called a christian.” Let modern christians blush,
 who, rather than subject themselves to a small fine, or
 the loss of a trifling privilege, will give up the inestimable
 comfort of worshipping their God according to
 their consciences!

of the privileges that belong to it? This is plainly the doctrine of the scriptures, and what must be inferred from the nature and design of the commission now before us. So that to say, as some do, that a man may repent of his sins and keep God's commandments, and so be a good man and in favour with his Maker, without being admitted into the church of his Redeemer, implies a manifest contradiction; since this is one of the most plain and positive commands of God, that men should be baptized as we'll as repent, and so be admitted into union with Him, in whom *alone* God is *well pleased*, and on account of whom alone, and because of our relation to that beloved person, God has promised to accept our imperfect services. That this is a just representation of the value of repentance, and of the condition in which we stand with respect to God, is evident, among many other proofs of it, that might be mentioned, from the direction given by S. Peter, to those who were so strangely moved by his powerful sermon.^o For when they asked of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* His answer was, "repent" and be baptized every one of you, in the "name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of
" sins."

^o Acts ii. 14, &c.

“ sins.” The apostle knew that repentance alone was not sufficient to procure this necessary remission, or reconcile sinful man to an offended Deity. He knew that repentance, in itself, can never be either a meritorious or an efficient cause of pardon and acceptance with God. In no sense, indeed, can it be said to be a cause, but as it concurs in removing sin, which is always an impediment in the way of the divine mercy : But then the merit, the virtue and efficiency, is all in the

“ The learned Mr B. Holloway, in the introduction to his three admirable discourses on this text, observes, that “ among the many impious attempts that have of late “ been made upon christianity, one has been, to divide “ these two duties, *repentance, and faith in the redemption by Jesus Christ*, from each other ; or rather to persuade people, that a new devised simple and naked kind “ of repentance, without any faith in the redemption by “ Christ, is the whole of christianity, and all that we “ want. So that according to this doctrine, we have, “ after all, christianity without a Christ, a Saviour “ without redemption, spiritual graces, without any “ influence or operation on the soul ; and either need “ no salvation, or if we do, are sufficient of ourselves, “ to save ourselves.” He concludes with this truly christian admonition, “ *Laying aside every weight and the “ sin that does so easily beset us, pride, and high conceit of our reasoning powers, our moral performances, “ and simple repentances, let us with humble devotion “ pray to God, for that which is the only proper “ ground of our acceptance and pardon, viz. that he “ would fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that “ we may abound in hope, through the power of the “ Holy Ghost.*”

the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And as all our virtue, all our praise, is from him, so there are particular institutions appointed for the conveyance of his grace and goodness to us. Among these, the words of my text, as well as the apostolic direction just now mentioned, point out the sacrament of baptism as the first; and which must be duly received, in order to prepare us for the other ordinances of the gospel. “*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,*”^a the command of Ananias to repenting Saul, plainly shews, that the christian baptism is a cleansing rite, and conveys some necessary purification to the receiver. And those who are not pleased with so easy a way of acquiring this benefit, and on that account despise our Saviour’s institution, would do well to attend to what the sacred history relates of the Syrian leper, who came to the prophet of Israel, expecting to be cured in a pompous, or in what some people would call, a rational manner, but received only this simple message from the prophet’s servant, “*Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean.*” This was a blessing, which, it seems, the great man was not to expect in his own way, or from the un sanctified waters of Abana and Pharpar :

^a Acts xxii. 16.

Pharpar: He must receive it from the waters of Jordan, and by the ceremony of dipping seven times, or be content to remain a leper: And if we will not submit to be cleansed in the way that the gospel prescribes, the corruption of our nature will remain, and we must die in our sins. To wash in cold water seemed, no doubt, an improper prescription for the leprosy, and to do it just seven times, could not well be accounted for on rational principles. Yet the power of a divinely commissioned prophet gave success to both, and a warning to the haughty spirit of man, to trust the great Physician of our souls with the cure of them; since however simple, or mean, his prescriptions may seem in our eyes, if submitted to in faith and humility, they will never fail to produce the designed effect. God has chosen such means of conveying his grace and favour to us, as are least apt to fill us with high notions of our own merit and ability: For it is certain, the divine communications will never flow in any channel, which human pride has made impure.*

* This observation is to be met with in a *Discourse upon Religion*, the pious production of a late amiable and worthy character of this country, and published after his death. Among other remarks, which this gentleman makes on the propriety of the christian sacraments, he uses the following apposite simile. "It cannot be doubted that God may supernaturally con-

We must not then think to act in religious matters, according to our own caprice or fancy, nor do, each of us, what shall seem good in our own eyes : but “ whatsoever thing the Lord has commanded us, that we must observe to do ; we must neither add thereto, nor diminish from it.” For to this purpose, the divine commission in my text authorized the apostles, not only to baptize all nations, and so unite them to Christ, as members of his body, but to “ teach them also to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them,” whatsoever he had given in charge to his apostles, to be prescribed to, and required of, all his followers. Now this is a part of the apostolical commission so generally acknowledged, and for the most part, so well understood, as necessary both to the propagation and support of the christian religion, that I have little occasion to enlarge much upon it. One thing, however, I cannot help remarking, as I think it deserves notice, that in the scheme of christian practice here laid down for

“ vey his grace, through any channel, or by any mean, and so annex spiritual blessings to the performance of certain outward actions, that the one shall as regularly follow upon the other, as heat upon coming near a fire.” Page 168.

for the observance of all nations, our Lord's commands are all comprehended under one denomination, and no distinction made between what are called moral and positive duties. We are not told, that some things are good because commanded, and others commanded because good. We are not referred, for the regulation of our conduct, to the standard of moral rectitude, and the eternal fitness of things. Our heavenly Teacher made no use of these idle distinctions, the foolish conceits of a vain philosophy, which affects to teach us "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." It is the law of the gospel which points out to christians what is really and truly good : and unless we are careful to observe what our great Lawgiver has there commanded, and observe it because he has commanded it, and from a principle of love and obedience to him, he has assured us, we have no title to call him Lord, Lord : We have no right to expect his favour, or depend on his protection, unless we "do the things which he commands us." It is his approbation alone on which we must rely, as that which stamps all their value on our imperfect services. And this approbation is to be discovered and

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applied

applied by those significations of his will, which he has revealed and made known for that purpose : revealed them to his apostles, and made them known to his church, by their inspired writings, from generation to generation.

We have now taken a short view of that divine scheme of salvation, provided for all nations by him, who, to that end, and in the character of Mediator, had received all power in heaven and in earth. We have considered, as far as the present occasion will admit, the nature and design of those powers and privileges, which were originally conferred by the commission in my text, and which, from the gracious promise made in the conclusion of it, we have ground to hope, will be continued in the church, *even unto the end of the world*. And indeed, this is no more than what was necessary for encouraging the apostles to engage in, and go through with, such an important and arduous undertaking. For, as we are informed that Moses, when commissioned by Jehovah to go and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, made this reply, in diffidence of his own ability for such an enterprize, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and
" that

“that I should bring forth the children of
 “Israel out of Egypt?”* So when our Lord
 commanded his apostles to go and bring all
 nations out of their slavish idolatry, into the
 profession of that religion which alone could
 make them free, they would, no doubt, be
 saying within themselves, ‘ Who are we, a
 company of poor, weak, illiterate men, that
 we should be sent to profelyte all nations, to
 bring them off from their former prejudices,
 and make them accept the terms of salvation
 offered by a crucified Redeemer?’ This, we
 may suppose, our Lord foresaw; and there-
 fore, as the God of Israel answered Moses,
 saying, “Certainly I will be with thee,” so
 does our Saviour here encourage his apostles,
 with a “Lo, I am with you always, even
 “unto the end of the world.” Indeed some
 are of opinion, that there is a farther resem-
 blance between these two cases, and that the
 author of the gracious promise in my text,
 was not only Jesus of Nazareth, who had
 done many wonderful works, had made the
 blind to see, the lame to walk, the dead to
 rise, and himself to be raised from a guarded
 sepulchre; but was also, by the peculiar con-
 struction of this promise, declared to be, even

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* Exodus iii. 11.

no less a Being, than the adorable *I am*, the same *Jehovah* who appeared to Moses, for the deliverance of his people out of Egypt, and now commissioned the apostles for the forming his church out of "all nations."

We

* When Moses received orders to go ambassador into Egypt, a land over-run with false deities, he desired instructions, by what name or title God would be made known to the children of Israel: whereupon the *Lord* summed up his divine majesty, in this short but comprehensive definition, *I am that I am*. According to which phrase, he expresseth himself in another place, *See now that I even I am*. But if we look into the gospel history (as Mr Reeves observes, in his sermon on the text) we shall find our blessed Saviour describing himself by the very same character, and speaking in this divine style more than once. Thus when he came very seasonably to the relief of his disciples, labouring hard in a storm at sea, he administered comfort to them in these words, "Be of good cheer, *Ἐγώ εἰμι*, it is the *I am*, be not afraid." (S. Matt. xiv. 27.) He makes also a right notion of the *I am*, an article of salvation: for so he tells the Jews, "If ye believe not that *I am*, ye shall die in your sins." (S. John viii. 24.) And confirms the truth of this assertion, in words equivalent to an oath: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am*." When therefore we find this expression *I am* appropriated, in the Old Testament, to set forth the eternal necessary existence of the one true God, and our Saviour, who spake by the same divine Spirit, so often declaring himself in the New Testament to be the *I am*, surely we cannot but infer, that the same words must signify the same thing in both scriptures, and that Jesus thought it no robbery to make himself one with *Jehovah* by assuming the *I am*, the essential character of the true God. And so much, were the Jews convinced of this, and sensible of the great dignity of this

We need not wonder then that such a gracious promise, from one so infinitely powerful, and able to perform it, encouraged the apostles to undertake, and supported them in the discharge of, the important trust assigned to them. They could not but perceive, to their unspeakable satisfaction, that they were sent forth to convert the world, by the same Almighty, omnipresent Being, who had been so long the *Worship of Israel*, and had wrought such wonders for that chosen people, and now promised to be with them his apostles, as the God and Guardian of the christian church, even to the end of the world. "Go, teach all nations," says he, and *lo, I am with you: With you* my chosen servants, to whom I have now delegated proper powers, for executing the commission I have given you: *Behold*, take special notice of what I say, I am with you always, at all times, and upon all occasions, when you are employed in the discharge of your sacred office, I am with you in the execution of it, and

divine title, that when those who apprehended our Saviour told they sought Jesus of Nazareth, and he answered, *I am*, (S. John xviii. 5.) they were terrified, and fell back to the ground, were struck with an unusual awe, at the very mentioning, on such a solemn occasion, of these words, which they well knew to be distinguishing name and character of the *Most High*.

and that too, to the very end of the world, so long as my church shall last, which will be even to the dissolution of all things.

Nothing is more evident, than that our Saviour here supposes, there were to be apostles upon earth to the end of the world, otherwise he could not possibly make good this gracious promise to them. But it is likewise as certain, that the persons to whom our Saviour spoke these words, were not to continue in this world, beyond the ordinary course of nature; nay, it is a fact, that most of them were hurried out of it, rather in an untimely way. So that this remarkable promise must have been made to the apostles, not as private persons, or as our Lord's immediate attendants, but as *apostles*, persons sent to convert and baptize the nations, and whose office was, therefore, to continue, as long as there should be nations upon earth, to partake of the benefits of it. For had the promise been purely personal, and to have expired with the apostles, as some have foolishly pretended, it would have run in these words, "I will be with you all *your days*," and not *always*, especially since the following words, "*to the end of the world*," are the very same in the original, with what S. Matthew uses to signify the general judgment,

ment, or consummation of all things.* But the truth is, and every discerning person must at first sight perceive it, that this promise, so essential to the support, nay, to the very being of the christian church, is not made so much to the persons of the apostles, as to the apostolical office, or at least to their persons only, as vested with that office, and consequently to all persons, to the end of the world, who should ever have that office conferred upon them. It will not be denied, that Matthias had the benefit of this promise, though he was not yet numbered with the apostles, when it was delivered: nor will Barnabas and Paul, I presume, be excluded from it. And if these were entitled to the support of it, not by their being personally present at the time it was made, but by virtue of their apostolical powers, the same privilege must be extended to all, who shall ever be invested with those powers, or succeed to the office of the apostles: an office which, it is plain, from the very nature and design of it, as described in the words of my text, must be continued while the world lasts, or while there are people upon earth to be baptized and brought to Christ, and taught to observe whatsoever he has commanded.

Having

* S. Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49.

Having now discovered how the apostles were to continue in the church to the end of the world, we shall be at no loss to understand, in what sense our Lord here promises to be always with them. To find out this, we need not have recourse to the wild and extravagant opinion of those, who assert the human nature of Christ to be every where present: neither is it sufficient to observe, that he is present with them as God, for so he is in all places, and with all creatures, as the support of their existence. Whereas our Saviour here promises to be with his apostles in a peculiar sense, in a manner particularly appropriated to them as apostles. And that we might not be mistaken in a matter of such consequence, he has elsewhere sufficiently explained his meaning, and shewn how the promise in my text is to be understood. For as he here assures his apostles, *he* will be with them to the end of the world, so he tells them in another place, that his *Holy Spirit* shall be always with them. “ I will pray the Father,” says he, “ and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth:” Which is the same in effect with himself being always with them, since the Spirit of Truth

✠ S. John xiv. 16.

Truth is likewise the Spirit of Christ; and wheresoever the Spirit is, there is Christ also. In a word, our Saviour here promises his apostles, that he will be always with them to the end of the world, by his Holy Spirit accompanying and assisting them in the discharge of their sacred office, and particularly in handing down the commission they had received, by regular succession, to the end of time. The manner in which this has been always conveyed, plainly shews the part which the Holy Spirit is graciously pleased to take in it. When our blessed Lord himself was glorified to be an High Priest, it was by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost: and when after his resurrection, he appointed his apostles to the work of the ministry, "he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," declaring at the same time, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Accordingly the apostles being thus sent and ordained by our Lord, took special care to transfer the same Spirit to others, which they had received from him.^w Only they did not

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pretend

^w The learned Dr Horne (in one of his truly instructive and evangelical discourses) speaking of this *ecclesiastical* measure of the gift of Christ, makes the following just and striking remarks. "As to its na-

pretend to do it precisely after the same manner as Christ had done, by the act of breathing. For that was peculiar to Christ himself, from whom the Spirit *proceedeth*, and having a resemblance to what was done at the creation, when God "breathed into man the breath of life," was justly considered as a distinguishing symbol of divine power.

ture, it is a *commission*, or an *office*, concerning which it is a rule established beyond all controversy, that "no man taketh it unto himself." Internal gifts and graces may qualify a person for an office, but they cannot put him into one. No man, however righteous and holy through faith, and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, can have authority to act in the name of Christ, till Christ gives him that authority. Before that is done, let his life and character be what they will, his ministrations can have no validity. Whatever he may be in other respects, in this particular he is a grievous offender, and will be found guilty before God of sacrilegiously intruding into an office, to which he can have no pretensions. A crime, for which the leprosy once rose up in the forehead of a monarch (2 Chr. xxvi.) and Korah and all his company (holy as they said they all were) went down alive into the pit. And that none in the christian church might imitate the presumption of Uzziah, or "go in the gainsaying of Korah," even Christ "took not this honour upon himself, nor glorified himself to be made an high-priest" (for a glory it was to him) "till he was called of God," by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the presence of the people, and by the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. From that time, Jesus began to preach." Who then is that follower of Jesus, that shall offer to begin before? Vol. II. p. 171.

power. The apostles therefore made use of another antient and venerable mode of conveying the Spirit, even the laying on of hands : and wherever we read of their ordaining any, we find they always did it after this expressive and significant manner : and that too, whether they ordained them into their whole office, or into any part of it. For nothing is more certain, than that there always has been a subordination in the ministry, and these various degrees of office-bearers in the church, which have been wisely continued to this day, for governing, feeding, and watching over the flock of Christ. And though there be now no workers of miracles, no inspired speakers with tongues, nor interpreters, nor discerners of spirits ; yet there are still, and 'tis to be hoped will be to the world's end, men who have succeeded to the spiritual powers of the apostles, in governing and directing the church under Christ, its supreme Head and Governor, and others who, in due subordination to these, discharge the several offices assigned to them, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And this plan of spiritual government and instruction being instituted by Christ himself, and carefully transmitted by his apostles to the converted na-

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tions,

tions, how can it now be set aside or changed by any of these nations, without involving them in the guilt of infringing that divine authority, by which it was at first established? It is well known, that no society can subsist, if those who preside in it, have no more power or authority committed to them than the rest have. And as the church of Christ is a regular, well formed society, it necessarily follows, that the governors of it must have their distinct powers, and can claim the exercise of them, to the ends and purposes for which they received them. They must not allow such sacred powers to lie dormant in their hands, when the necessities of the church require the exertion of them. As long as there are nations to be instructed in the principles of the gospel, or a church to be formed in any part of the inhabited world, the successors of the apostles are obliged, by the commission they hold, to contribute as far as they can, or may be required of them, to the propagation of these principles, and the formation of every church, upon the most pure and primitive model. No fear of worldly censure ought to keep them back from so good a work: no connection with any state, nor dependence on any government whatever, should

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tie up their hands from communicating the blessings of that kingdom, which "is not of this world," and diffusing the means of salvation, by a valid and regular ministry, wherever they may be wanted. When our Lord first sent out his apostles, to announce the kingdom of heaven being then at hand, by works of mercy and charity, he added this generous command, "Freely ye have received, freely give."^x The successors of these apostles ought all to remember this, and "go and do likewise." Whatever be the power and authority their heavenly Master has committed to them, it is no more than ministerial : they act only under him as his ministers and stewards, and must one day give an account to him of all their actions. The power they have, in all the various branches of it, is still to be considered as his power in their hands : they derive it all from him, who is continually present with them in the exercise of it. And therefore, as they themselves would need to have a care how they exercise this power, or neglect the proper and necessary exercise of it : so when they are thus careful to do their duty, and have nothing else in view by it, but the glory of God, and the good of his church, they
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* S. Matt. x. 8.

my humbly hope, that others will take care also not to misrepresent their intentions, nor despise their endeavours in so good a cause : remembering what our great Master said to his commissioned servants, “ He that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” Our Saviour assured his apostles, that “ as the Father had sent him, so sent he them,” with power to continue this mission, and to make thereby a standing provision, for communicating the grace and influence of his gospel to all nations.

This provision therefore, in accomplishment of the prophetic promise in my text, he is pleased to bless and sanctify with his word and Holy Spirit, and thereby to make it effectual to all the purposes of salvation. Under the ministry even of the apostles themselves, it was this divine promise which warranted their office, and ratified their administrations : it was this blessing of God’s Holy Spirit, which gave success to their labours, and made their preaching of the gospel so prevalent on those that heard it. Though “ Paul himself planted, and Apollos watered, yet it was God only that gave the increase.” And the case is the same in every

age

age and situation of the church. The labourers may and ought to do their duty, as becometh their several stations; but the fruitfulness of the vineyard depends altogether on the " continual dew of God's blessing." Without the " healthful Spirit of his grace sent down," as we are taught to pray, " on our Bishops and Pastors, and " on all congregations committed to their charge," the ordinances we administer would be but dead and empty signs, and the people under our care, would no longer be *living* members of Christ's mystical body. Whereas he being always present, according to his promise, by his Holy Spirit, at the administration of the several offices he has ordained in his church, they are thereby sanctified, and made effectual to all the purposes of christian edification. The members of Christ's church are thereby built up in their most holy faith, and being thus reared on the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, they are compared to a " building fitly framed together, growing up to a " holy temple in the Lord." Attempts have been made in all ages of the church, to sap the foundation of this spiritual building,

" and

^z Eph. ii. 21.

“ and heresies, we are told, must be, that
 “ they who are approved may be made
 “ manifest.”* The cause of pure uncorrupt-
 ed truth, is not always found consistent with
 the sordid views of worldly-minded men.
 And this is the reason, why the christian
 faith has frequently been modelled accord-
 ing to the fashion of the times. Every new
 sect must have a creed of their own making ;
 and there is no doctrine or mode of worship,
 however contrary to antient faith, or primi-
 tive practice, but the men of this world, if
 it answer their ends, will be tampering with
 texts of scripture to support it. But the hea-
 then may rage, and the enemies of Christ
 imagine a vain thing : yet “ the foundation
 “ of God standeth sure.” And though
 many, and once famous, churches, have
 long since been buried in the darkness of
 error and superstition, yet we may assure
 ourselves, Christ will not suffer his truth to
 fail, but will preserve it among some or
 other of the converted nations, and at last
 present to himself a glorious church, not
 “ having spot, or wrinkle, or any such
 “ thing.”

These few observations may serve to give
 some general notion of the way and manner
 in

in which Christ has been, and is, and ever will be, present with his church, according to his gracious promise in these words, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And if he is so mercifully condescending, as thus to countenance and support the successors of his apostles, to sanctify their administrations, and grant success to their labours: If he has entailed so great salvation upon his church, and made it the earthly Zion, in which he delights to dwell: then how ill does it become men to make light of all this mercy, to vilify his divine appointment, and depreciate those means of salvation, which he has been graciously pleased to put into our hands? Will any pretended regard to the rules of what is vainly called *mortality* excuse such a professed contempt of plain and positive institutions, delivered by the Son of God, by him who has "all power in heaven and in earth," and delivered too as the only means of restoration and happiness to fallen man? What monstrous ingratitude, as well as base presumption must it be, that can look down with scorn on this scheme of mercy, as an arbitrary unmeaning appointment, or regard the observance of its rules as a matter of indifference? Indeed! Has the great God

of Israel, who once wrought such wonders for his chosen people ; the adorable *I am*, the Almighty Jehovah ; has he founded a church in his own blood, promised his presence and protection to it, established the rules of faith and obedience in it, adorned it with the means of grace, and appointed certain officers to be the regular administrators of them ? And is it yet a matter of indifference, whether we shew any regard to this church, or any just sense of a divine presence in it ; whether we live up to these rules, or make use of these means, or apply regularly to these ministers for the benefit of them ? If all these things are of no moment, and we are left at our liberty as to the observance of them : then, what could be the meaning or design of those passages of the apostolic writings, which exhort us “ to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,”^b and “ to mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and avoid them.”^c Offences against the faith, and divisions or separations from the unity, of the church, were not, it seems, in the eyes of the apostles, such light things as they now appear to be with many who

^b S. Jude 3. ^c Rom. xvi. 17.

who call themselves christians. And the reason is, the apostles looked directly to their Master's kingdom, without casting a side-glance upon the present world. When they went forth to convert and instruct the nations, they kept close to the commission they had received, and with divine ardour and resolution, pressed the necessity of coming to Christ in the way of his own appointment, since the dutiful observance of what the gospel commands, can only proceed from the grace which it inspires. Such was the doctrine of these primitive preachers; such the zeal and fervency with which their " sound " went into all the earth, and their words " unto the ends of the world." Whereas nothing is to be seen now, but a lamentable coldness and indifference as to these evangelical truths; especially among those who have it in their power to discountenance, and therefore ought not to patronize, such a glaring degeneracy. The world begins now to see no great harm in infidelity itself. Christianity is swallowed up in the religion of nature: the chair is almost every where filled with scorers: Even the productions of the pulpit are of a strange unchristian composition, and favour more of the rudiments of philosophy, than of the doctrine of Christ.

The preaching of the cross is again become foolishness to the learned, and a stumbling-block to the men of this world. Therefore, though Christ has promised to be always with his church, and never promised what he did not mean to perform, yet we cannot hope that he will be with a faithless and apostate people. Unless we co-operate with him zealously to the blessed end, for which he promises to be with us, he will withdraw his presence from us, and have nothing to do with a lukewarm generation. For thus the sentence runs, against every disobedient and gainsaying people, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."^d How

^d S. Matt. xxi. 43. This transition of the *Kingdom of God*, or the light and knowledge of the gospel, is strongly marked in these expressive lines of one of *Herbert's sacred Poems*.

" Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,
 " Ready to pass to the *American* strand.
 " When height of malice, and prodigious lusts,
 " Impudent finning, witchcrafts and distrusts,
 " (The marks of future banè) shall fill our cup,
 " Unto the brim, and make our measure up.

—————
 " Yet as the church shall thither westward fly,
 " So sin shall trace and dog her instantly —
 " That when they have accomplished the round,
 " And met, in the east, their first and ancient found,
 " Judgment may meet them both, and search them round.
 " Thus do both lights as well in church as sun,
 " Light one another, and together run.

How careful then should we be to walk worthy of the advantages we enjoy, and to be fruitful in every good word and work? For "herein is my Father glorified," said the blessed Son of God, "that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples." The bearing much fruit, it seems, is the only way by which we can glorify his Father, and the best, indeed the only proof of our being really his disciples, of our abiding in him as branches of the true vine. It is not enough that we be entered into union with him, and made members of his church, in the way prescribed by his commission to the apostles: we must also "continue in that holy communion and fellowship, and do all such good works as he has commanded us to walk in." So shall we ensure to ourselves the continuance of that divine presence and protection, which he promised to his apostles and their successors, even to the end of the world. This powerful promise we have the utmost reason to confide in, if we are only

"Thus also sin and darkness follow still
 "The church and sun, with all their power and skill.
 "But as the sun still goes both west and east,
 "So also did the church, by going west,
 "Still eastward go, because it drew more near
 "To time and place where judgment shall appear."

only thankful to the gracious Author of it, since we have seen it made good, in a very wonderful manner, to that part of his church, to which we have the happiness to belong. Without any of the boasted props of civil establishment, yea, often depressed by the hand of insulting power, it has, nevertheless, firmly stood its ground, supported by its own Almighty Head, and amidst the corruption of surrounding error, has restored itself to the purity of the primitive standard. May we not suppose, that for wise and good reasons, it has been thus wonderfully preserved and purified? No doubt, to shew the all-sufficiency of the divine protection; and perhaps to afford, through God's good providence, the means of conveying to others, a more liberal share of those spiritual blessings, which we enjoy under some restraint. And if such a blessed prospect is now presented to us, by the happy occasion of our assembling here this day, who would not wish success to the means of promoting so desirable an end? Who would not earnestly pray that the dispensation of the grace and knowledge of the gospel, by a valid and truly apostolic ministry, may, like the glorious light of heaven, go out from the east, to the utmost boundary of the western world, and
nothing

nothing be hid from its saving influence ?

Let

The desirable object of this prayer, as well as of the good work that gave occasion to the foregoing discourse, is most happily expressed by the worthy *Dr Horne*, now Dean of Canterbury, and President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who in his *Apology &c.* p. 27. after mentioning some respectable characters on the other side of the Atlantic, that ‘ give us ideas of our Episcopal Brethren in America, to which we were before strangers,’ delivers his pious sentiments in these pathetic wishes. ‘ May the great God, our Saviour, prosper the glorious work of their hands upon them, till the clouds of infidelity disperse before the Sun of Righteousness, rising to the American, perhaps, as he sets to the European world ; and till the unhappy misguided wanderers, having their eyes opened by the shining of his marvellous light, return to the church, and all become one fold under one Shepherd, the Bishop of their souls, ruling in every church that is his, by an earthly representative. And O come that happy day, when God shall put it into the hearts of our governors, to remember the groanings of such as are in captivity under the bondage of sin, and to consider the cries and tears of the hundreds and the thousands, who would receive a Bishop of the Church of England, as an *angel of God, even as Christ Jesus* ; that he might ordain them elders in every city, who being sent forth, might preach liberty to the miserable captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are fast bound in darkness and the shadow of death, calling them forth into the light of the Lord God, and the Lamb, to behold him shining in his church in the beauty of holiness. For whom this glorious work of establishing Episcopacy in America, is reserved, God only knows. Blessed is he whose heart shall conceive, and whose hands shall accomplish it. His works done in the faith, and for the love of his Master, shall praise him, when that Master sits in judgment, in the gates of the new Jerusalem ; and all generations arising from the dust, shall call him blessed.’

Let it be our fervent petition to the throne of grace, that the blessed author and finisher of our faith, would thus give universal spread to the pure and primitive profession of it; that he would make his church to be yet glorious upon earth, and the joy of all lands: and thus teaching the nations once more, by the regular successors of his own apostles, give them universal cause to rejoice in the accomplishment of his merciful promise, "*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" To him, therefore, the divine, Almighty, Sovereign and only Protector of his church, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls: to him, in unity with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all glory and honour, thanksgiving and praise, now and evermore. Amen.

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